

Message Text

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NODIS
CHEROKEE JERUSALEM FOR ATHERTON USDEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, UK, XF

SUBJECT: UK REPORT ON OWEN MIDDLE EAST VISIT

1. FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM DR. OWEN TO SECRETARY VANCE,
DELIVERED BY UK EMBOFF MARCH 2, IS REPEATED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.
2. BEGIN TEXT. DEAR CY, YOU MAY LIKE TO HAVE MY IMPRESSIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST SCENE AFTER MY BRIEF VISIT TO JORDAN AND ISRAEL IN THE PAST FOUR DAYS. I CAN'T SAY I CAME BACK GREATLY ENCOURAGED, BUT EQUALLY I DON'T DESPAIR.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 054964

PART OF MY OBJECTIVE IN GOING WAS TO PAY OVERDUE VISITS TO ISRAEL AND JORDAN, WHERE NO BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY HAS BEEN FOR OVER 5 YEARS.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND I HAD A LONG TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN OVER DINNER JUST BEFORE I LEFT AND THIS WAS MORE IMPORTANT

THAN ANY TALKS WHICH I HAD IN JORDAN. ALTHOUGH THE KING SUPPORTED SADAT'S PRESENT PLAN OF ACTION AND SAID HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO HELP IT SUCCEED, HE FEARED IT WOULD BE FRUSTRATED BY ISRAELI SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS. HE FORESAW AT BEST A REPEAT OF THE "242 SYNDROME" AND AT WORST A COLLAPSE WHICH WOULD SWEEP AWAY 242 AND MUCH ELSE, AND

WOULD BE EXPLOITED BY THE EXTREMISTS AND THE SOVIET UNION. IN PARTICULAR THE KING RESISTED ALL SUGGESTION THAT THE BEGIN PLAN COULD BE ADAPTED TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN WHICH JORDAN COULD TAKE PART. HE MUST FIRST HAVE AN ISRAELI COMMITMENT TO COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL AND TO SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS. HE SAW NO FUTURE IN IDEAS LIKE A JOINT ISRAEL/JORDAN ADMINISTRATION FOR THE WEST BANK, JOINT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, OR A JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY. HE WAS QUITE FIRM THAT BEFORE HE COULD DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS FOR A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD HE MUST KNOW WHAT WAS TO COME AT THE END OF IT. THE ONLY SMALL RAY OF LIGHT WAS THAT HE BROUGHT UP THE IDEA OF RECIPROCAL TREATMENT AS BETWEEN ISRAELI SETTLERS ON THE WEST BANK AND ARAB INHABITANTS OF ISRAEL. HE ALSO SEEMED INTERESTED IN ACCESS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN AT ACRE. WE HAD HEARD THIS BEFORE FROM PRINCE HASSAN WHO MENTIONED IT AGAIN IN MORE DETAIL WHEN I SAW HIM IN JORDAN. I THINK THIS CONCEPT OF RECIPROCITY IS ONE WHICH WE SHOULD EXPLORE FURTHER AS THE ONLY RAY OF LIGHT. IN SHORT IT IS CLEAR
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 054964

THAT KING HUSSEIN WANTS TO RESERVE JUDGMENT UNTIL HE SEES THE OUTCOME OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES EXERCISE AT LEAST, ON WHICH HE PINS FEW HOPES. MEANWHILE HE SAID HE WAS CONCENTRATING ON CONTAINING THE DIVISIONS IN THE ARAB CAMP. IT IS HARD TO SEE ANY INCENTIVE FOR HIM TO TAKE THE RISK OF NEGOTIATING WITH ISRAEL. THE STATUS QUO IS NOT INTOLERABLE FOR HIM.

IN ISRAEL I HAD A SERIES OF FRANK AND HARD-HITTING TALKS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, WITH MOSHE DAYAN, WEIZMAN AND LABOR LEADERS PERES, EBAN AND ALLON, WHICH I ENJOYED RATHER MORE THAN I HAD EXPECTED. I STRESSED FOUR MAIN POINTS. FIRST, I URGED THE ISRAELIS, IN PUBLIC AS WELL AS IN PRIVATE, TO EMPHASIZE THE TRANSITIONAL NATURE OF THEIR PROPOSALS FOR THE WEST BANK PARTICULARLY THE PROVISION FOR AN OPEN UNRESTRICTED REVIEW AFTER 5 YEARS. SECOND, I UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE OF JORDANIAN INVOLVEMENT AT SOME STAGE, THOUGH I ADDED THAT THE TIME WAS NOT YET RIPE AND THAT MEANWHILE I WAS NOT ABOUT TO PUT PRESSURE ON THEM. THIRD I MADE CLEAR MY ANXIETY ABOUT ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS, IN PARTICULAR THE INTENTION TO CREATE LUMPS OF ISRAEL ON THE WEST BANK AND SUGGESTED THAT THEY SHOULD

TRY TO INTEGRATE AND AVOID THE TERM SETTLEMENTS. I ALSO TOUCHED ON THE POSSIBILITY OF RECIPROCITY BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND GALILEE AND A PORT AT ACRE. IT WAS NOTICEABLE THAT DAYAN AND PERES WERE BOTH QUITE INTERESTED IN THIS AND IT IS AN AREA WHICH THEY HAD DISCUSSED PRIVATELY IN THE PAST WITH THE JORDANIANS. SINCE I LEFT I HAVE HEARD VIA BEGIN'S POLITICAL ADVISER YEHUDA AVNER, THAT BEGIN

HIMSELF HAS BEEN SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTED TO ASK FURTHER ABOUT THESE IDEAS AND AVNER DID NOT EXCLUDE THAT BEGIN MIGHT RAISE THE QUESTION WITH YOU IN WASHINGTON. HE ASKED THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PUBLIC REACTION - YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT I DID REFER BRIEFLY TO THE SUBJECT IN A SPEECH WHICH I MADE ON TUESDAY, AS FOLLOWS:

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 054964

"IT MAY BE THAT IF JORDAN IS BEING ASKED TO ACCEPT ARRANGEMENTS WHICH DO NOT RETURN TO THE PRE-1967 SITUATION THEY SHOULD BE OFFERED RECIPROCAL ARRANGEMENTS TO OFFSET THIS INVOLVING ARABS LIVING IN ISRAEL AND ACCESS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN."

BUT I WON'T ELABORATE ON THIS ANY FURTHER.

I MUCH APPRECIATED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES WITH ROY ATHERTON. I PERSONALLY AM VERY DUBIOUS ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR THE "PRINCIPLES APPROACH" SINCE BOTH SIDES SEE IT AS A WAY OF PRE-DETERMINING THE NEGOTIATIONS. AS YOU WELL KNOW BEGIN WILL NOT COMMIT HIMSELF TO COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OR ANY WORDING WITH ANY IMPLICATION THAT THERE COULD BE AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE. EVEN A REFERENDUM EXCLUDING THIS QUESTION CAN, HE FEELS, BE EXPLOITED EITHER BY WRITE-IN CAMPAIGNS OR BY A BOYCOTT.

ON SPECIFIC ISSUES, I ENCOUNTERED A UNIFORMLY HARD LINE ON THE SINAI SETTLEMENTS EXCEPT THAT WEIZMAN ONLY WANTS HIS AIRFIELDS AND MIGHT EVEN ACCEPT ONLY ONE AT EILAT. A COMPROMISE MENTIONED BY PERES WHO ATTACHES GREAT STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO BOTH AIRFIELDS IS TO KEEP THEM UNTIL A COMPREHENSIVE PEACE TREATY IS SIGNED, AND HE THOUGHT THAT SADAT WOULD AGREE. HE AND DAYAN THOUGHT THAT RECIPROCAL EXCHANGE OF TERRITORY MIGHT BE A BETTER SOLUTION, AND WOULD DISCUSS IT IF THE EGYPTIANS WOULD PUT IT FORWARD. THERE WAS A GREATER VARIETY OF VIEWS ABOUT THE WEST BANK, BUT LITTLE FLEXIBILITY IN THEM. WEIZMAN, FOR INSTANCE, DECLARED THAT ISRAEL WOULD NEVER LEAVE THE WEST BANK. DAYAN, WHILE ACCEPTING THAT THERE COULD BE AN ACT OF

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 054964

DETERMINATION AT THE END OF THE TRANSITION PERIOD, STRESSED THAT IT WOULD BE FOR THE ARABS ALONE AND WOULD HAVE NO EFFECT ON THE ISRAELIS LIVING THERE. I COME MORE AND MORE TO THE VIEW THAT THE TRANSITION PERIOD SHOULD BE A STRAIGHT JORDAN/ISRAEL DEAL AND THAT ANYTHING IN BETWEEN WILL BE INCREDIBLY DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE. THE ONLY WAY I CAN SEE THAT JORDAN COULD ACCEPT THE RISK OF NEGOTIATING IS IF THEIR SECURITY WAS IN SOME WAY GUARANTEED AGAINST

THE REST OF THE ARAB WORLD. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE OPTIONS WHICH COULD PROVIDE A FRAMEWORK FOR SUCH A GUARANTEE.

REGRETTABLY THE ISRAELIS GAVE NO SIGN OF THINKING THAT IT MIGHT BE UP TO THEM TO GET THINGS MOVING AGAIN. THEY CONSIDER RATHER THAT THE BALL IS IN THE EGYPTIAN COURT. THEY ALSO FEEL IT IS UP TO THE JORDANIANS TO TABLE COUNTER-PROPOSALS FOR THE WEST BANK, AND WHILE THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM JOIN IN THEY ARE NOT LIKELY TO DO ANYTHING TO MAKE THIS EASIER FOR HUSSEIN. FRANKLY, RABIN SPOKE FOR MANY OF THEM WHEN HE ANALYZED VERY WELL THE STRATEGIC NEED FOR A BILATERAL AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT ONLY, AND THAT THIS WAS SADAT'S MOTIVE IN SCRUPPERING GENEVA. IN THEIR HEARTS MANY ISRAELIS FEEL THAT JORDAN CAN WAIT. THERE IS LOGIC AND SUBSTANCE BEHIND THIS VIEW.

THE REFRAIN THAT "EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE" IS FRUSTRATING, AND I THINK ROY ATHERTON MADE A GOOD POINT WHEN HE TOLD BEGIN THAT THEY WERE ALREADY IN A NEGOTIATION AND THAT IT WAS TIME FOR SOME BARGAINING TO START. THE WASHINGTON VISIT COULD CLEARLY MARK A CRITICAL TURNING POINT PERHAPS EVEN THE MAKE OR BREAK POINT FOR THE WHOLE SADAT INITIATIVE. I DOUBT WHETHER THERE IS ANYTHING THAT OTHERS CAN DO TO HELP YOU MAKE IT A SUCCESS, BUT WE SHALL BE GLAD TO DO ANYTHING WE CAN.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 06 STATE 054964

WITH BEST WISHES,

YOURS EVER,

DAVID. END TEXT.
CHRISTOPHER

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